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DE RUEHNE #2918/01 3191215
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 141215Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4181
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1277
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RHOVVKG/COMSEVENTHFLT
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002918

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STATE FOR SCA/PPD, PA/RRU

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USDOC FOR 4530/IEP/ANESA/OSA FOR BILL MURPHY

E.O. 12958:N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION-
OBAMA'S VICTORY, U.S.-INDIA RELATIONS, INDIA-CHINA
RELATIONS; NEW DELHI-NOVEMBER 13-14, 2008.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi reports on English-language media via email in the daily "Early Edition". USG customers please write to Geeta Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early Edition."

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION - OBAMA'S VICTORY

1. "OBAMA AND INDIA: OBAMA'S NAIVE VIEW ON KASHMIR" op-ed article by guest columnist and retired air vice marshall P.L. Purohit in the November 13, 2008, Mumbai edition of centrist Marathi daily SAKAAL. "Unfortunately, Barack Obama's understanding of the Kashmir issue is based on some half-truths and politically naive observations. Obama has remarked that resolving the Kashmir conflict would enable Pakistan to focus on militants on its soil and across its border with Afghanistan rather than on India, its traditional foe. This is not a very sound view because Pakistan is used to deploying terrorism as a means to achieve its political agenda against India. Also Pakistan treats the Taliban as a tool to extend its 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan. Pakistan does not want a democratically-elected sound administration in Afghanistan, which is why it dutifully strengthens Taliban over there. And most importantly, Obama fails to see the fact that Pakistan (and also China) wishes to derail India's economic rise and therefore continues to

support and sponsor Islamic militants in Kashmir. Unfortunately, Obama does not see these truths and his statements have been naturally welcomed by the Islamic hardliners in Pakistan. Unlike India which has rejected America's intervention in Kashmir, these extremist elements will certainly lap up Obama's recent remarks..." Similar editorial appeared in the November 13, 2008, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily APLA MAHANAGAR.

¶2. "OBAMA CHARMS ALL, AMERICANS SHOW NO INTEREST IN ECONOMIC SUMMIT" New York dispatch by Assistant Editor Sutirtha Chakrabarty in November 14 pro-Left Kolkata Bengali SAMBAD PRATIDIN. "The heads of 20 countries in which two-thirds of the world's populations live are coming to the U.S. to discuss the economic meltdown but the average American is not interested in it. Rather, the Washington Post has splashed Delhi's jubilant reaction after the president-elect Obama had phoned Manmohan Singh on the front-page... In reality, Americans, charmed by Obama, are not ready to show any interest in any initiative by the outgoing President who has been rated the worst... The president-elect has opposed directly the neo-liberal policies of Milton Friedman that have always been followed by Reagan to Bush. Obama has called for government intervention in the economy, tax imposts on the rich for spending on social security and relief for the middle class as well as for control on Wall Street... Bush does not like any of these recommendations...."

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¶3. "BARACK OBAMA: OUR LOSS OR GAIN" editorial-page article by Center for Studies in Social Sciences director Sugata Marjit in November 13 nationalist Kolkata Bengali ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "...The Indian government, chambers of commerce, and employees in the service sector are all worried about the proposed protectionist policies of the new president (elect) to invigorate the U.S. economy. Let us see how these policies harm us or affect the American economy... Does America have any option other than outsourcing? Profiteering by American capitalists and the fate of India's outsourcing employees may be tied together... For, if there is lesser profit from outsourcing, the possibility of reduction in salaries of Indian employees and in profit of the Indian companies will become stronger... But there is no question of stopping outsourcing. Besides, it is yet to be proved whether outsourcing has led to unemployment in the U.S. What Obama has said in his policy may appear popular but it may not be useful for the economy...because the interest of American capitalists and common employees in call centers of India is close to each other...."

¶4. "OBAMA MAKES HISTORY" editorial in November 7 nationalist Bhubaneswar Oriya SAMAYA. "...In the first place, Obama's victory has demolished the hitch between the American whites and American blacks. Obama has daunting tasks ahead. Putting the economy back on the rail and restoring the atmosphere of global understanding are the first two major items in his agenda. The world awaits a change. Only his healing touch can accomplish this. Indo-U.S. relations may get a boost during Obama's rule. America is known to get closer to India during tenures of Democrat administration. India has established strong links with the U.S. in recent years. Only time will show how Obama takes it further...."

U.S.-INDIA RELATIONS

¶5. "INDIA IN THE EYES OF THE U.S.," op-ed article in November 13 right-of-center DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily by strategic affairs specialist Brahma Chellaney: "The fact is that India is not Barack Obama's top priority. And he

is yet to form a team, which decides the foreign policy agenda. So it is early yet to say that he will want to play a role on the Kashmir issue, or put pressure on India on nuclear nonproliferation. India has already brought its nuclear program under the U.S.-led nuclear nonproliferation scanner by signing the nuclear agreement. U.S. efforts to mediate on Kashmir in the past have only favored Pakistan.... This is Bush's legacy that the U.S. is implementing a parallel policy of the intelligence information exchange and defense cooperation with India and Pakistan. Even now he has taken an initiative to provide Pakistan with US\$ 89.1-million worth advance F-16 fighter aircrafts, which will, certainly, be used against India. Under this situation, is it fair to ask why India is so defensive on Kashmir? Even if the U.S. appoints a special envoy on Kashmir,

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what more can he demand that weak Manmohan Singh has not already offered?"

¶6. "PRIME MINISTER'S EXPLANATION," editorial in November 12 nationalist RASHTRIYA SAHARA Hindi daily: "Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has clarified that U.S. President-elect Barack Obama tried to call him, but the contact could not establish as Singh was traveling and a convenient time could not be arranged for a call.... Certainly, during travel it is not possible to talk. At the same time, however, India shouldn't suffer from an inferiority complex. So what even if Obama did not call our PM? We should have not made an issue out of it. A nation, which the entire world considers a future superpower and strengthening relations with it is now the top agenda of the topmost countries' foreign policies, should not make a prestige issue out of such small things. It is foolishness and immaturity. In fact, it just shows India's internal weakness."

INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

¶7. "CHINA'S DOGMATIC PATH" editorial in the November 14, 2008, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily MAHARASHTRA TIMES. "China often makes claims on the border state of Arunachal Pradesh, and India has rebuffed the claim consistently. A small and not-so-influential section of Chinese leadership feels the need to develop friendly ties with India and explore all possibilities of economic co-operation. Making peace with India serves China's strategic interests in Asia as well. It strengthens China against the U.S., which is actually China's main adversary. However, the doctrinaire Maoists in China are unable to adopt a friendly stance vis-`-vis India. They are victims of their own rigidity, which explains their periodical refrain of Arunachal Pradesh..."
MULFORD